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NSC BRIEFING

29 June 1960

THE CONGO

I. Premier Patrice Lumumba has emerged as the "strong man" of the Congo, which becomes independent today.

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A. [REDACTED] however, has characterized his government as "weak" and having a "strong leftist tinge."

B. Of ten key secretaries of state (apparently intended as permanent bureau and ministry chiefs), five are said to be Communist-inclined.

II. Lumumba--who we believe solicited Communist financial support for his election campaign--appears to be a "neutralist" with a distinctly leftist and opportunistic bent.

A. It is possible that President Kasavubu, who has considerable popular support, will serve as a check on Lumumba, but his position as chief of state is largely ceremonial.

III. At the present time, the Congo, with its immediate grave economic problems, appears susceptible to Communist overtures concerning economic aid.

A. Peiping has already recognized the Congo and has taken steps to set up a news bureau in the Congo. However, it is not clear whether Lumumba will reciprocate.

B. Last night, TASS reported a note from Khrushchev to Lumumba which declared Soviet recognition and Moscow's "readiness" to exchange diplomatic representatives.

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